

Introduced by Senator Florez

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Maze)

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June 8, 2006

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 123—Relative to the Joint Legislative Committee on High-Speed Trains.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 123, as introduced, Florez. Joint Legislative Committee on High-Speed Trains.

This measure would establish, until December 31, 2008, the Joint Legislative Committee on High-Speed Trains, which would be composed of 5 Members of the Senate and 5 Members of the Assembly, as specified, to hold public hearings to receive public comment and review the work of the High-Speed Rail Authority and the plans for a high-speed train system in California. The measure would prescribe the powers and duties of the committee and would authorize the Senate Committee on Rules and the Assembly Committee on Rules to make money available to the Joint Legislative Committee on High-Speed Trains from the Senate and Assembly Operating Funds, as specified.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, California, over several decades, has built an
2 extensive network of freeways and airports, significantly
3 expanded local and regional public transportation systems,

1 greatly increased the number and frequency of commuter and
2 intercity rail services, and promoted the development and use of
3 alternative transportations modes, including bicycle, pedestrian,
4 and water transit facilities, to meet the state's growing
5 transportation needs; and

6 WHEREAS, These notable and sustained efforts are still not
7 adequate to meet all the mobility needs of the state's current or
8 future population; and

9 WHEREAS, Californians will face a massive transportation
10 challenge by the year 2020 to accommodate another 11 million
11 people and up to an additional 98 million intercity and
12 region-to-region trips, resulting in more traffic congestion,
13 reduced safety, more air pollution, longer travel times, and less
14 reliability and predictability in intercity travel; and

15 WHEREAS, The cost of expanding the current network of
16 highways and airports fully to meet the current and future
17 transportation needs may be prohibitive and is not feasible in
18 some regions; and

19 WHEREAS, California faces significant challenges in meeting
20 increasingly stringent air quality standards and moderating or
21 reducing its growing energy demand; and

22 WHEREAS, The Legislature and Governor in 1993
23 established the High Speed Rail Commission to determine the
24 feasibility of a high-speed train system in California, which
25 determined that such a system is technically, environmentally,
26 and economically feasible; and

27 WHEREAS, The Legislature and the Governor subsequently
28 created the High-Speed Rail Authority to build a high-speed train
29 system, after first preparing a business plan and completing all
30 required planning, environmental impact, engineering, and other
31 prefatory work, and the authority completed the business plan in
32 2000 and certified the Final Program Environmental Impact
33 Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) in 2005; and

34 WHEREAS, The EIR/EIS concluded, among other things, that
35 the high-speed train system would help meet the need for
36 intercity travel into the future and could carry up to 68 million
37 passengers a year by 2020, would increase connectivity and
38 accessibility to existing transit stations and airports, would
39 improve travel options in parts of the state with limited bus, rail,
40 and air transportation, would be safer and more reliable than

1 highways or air travel and reduce congestion on highways and
2 for air travel, would reduce door-to-door travel times, and would
3 reduce total travel times for all transportation modes by diverting
4 traffic to high-speed trains; and

5 WHEREAS, The EIR/EIS found that the project would have
6 significant environmental benefits, including decreased energy
7 consumption and improved air quality, would use less land than
8 needed to expand highways and airports, would have fewer
9 impacts overall on sensitive habitats and water resources, and
10 would provide opportunities to plan for transit-oriented growth to
11 meet future demands; and

12 WHEREAS, The alternative of expanding the existing
13 highway and air travel systems to transport the same 68 million
14 passengers would cost over \$82 billion (based on the valuation of
15 the dollar in 2003). This would be more than twice the cost of a
16 high-speed train alternative, would be less safe and reliable,
17 would increase energy use and petroleum dependency, would
18 increase suburban sprawl, and would have significant negative
19 impacts on water and air quality, on land uses and cultural
20 resources, and wetlands and biological resources; and

21 WHEREAS, There now is a considerable likelihood that the
22 scheduled vote on the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train
23 Bond Act for the 21st Century will be postponed until the
24 November 4, 2008, statewide general election in recognition of a
25 logjam of other state infrastructure bond measures on the
26 November 7, 2006, ballot; and

27 WHEREAS, There is an opportunity to establish a joint
28 legislative committee to further refine and develop the
29 high-speed train project in the time leading up to the November
30 4, 2008, statewide general election, including the amount and
31 timetable for financing the engineering and construction of the
32 project and the staging of the project; now, therefore, be it

33 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
34 *thereof concurring*, That the Joint Legislative Committee on
35 High-Speed Trains, composed of five Members of the Senate to
36 be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and five
37 Members of the Assembly to be appointed by the Speaker of the
38 Assembly, is hereby established; and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That the joint legislative committee shall be under
40 the direction of a Senate Chair and an Assembly Vice Chair,

1 appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of
2 the Assembly, respectively; and be it further

3 *Resolved*, That the joint legislative committee shall hold public
4 hearings to receive public comment and review the work of the
5 High-Speed Rail Authority and plans for development of the
6 project, and shall coordinate activities related to the high-speed
7 train project with the Legislature; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the joint legislative committee shall
9 recommend necessary legislation for the effective and efficient
10 advancement of the high-speed train project to the Legislature,
11 and shall develop and recommend to the Legislature appropriate
12 levels of funding and sources of funds to be utilized for the
13 project; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That the joint legislative committee and its members
15 shall have and exercise all of the rights, duties, and powers
16 conferred upon investigating committees and their members by
17 the Joint Rules of the Senate and Assembly, as they are adopted
18 and amended from time to time, which provisions are
19 incorporated herein and made applicable to this committee and
20 its members; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That the Senate Committee on Rules may make
22 money available from the Senate Operating Fund, as it deems
23 necessary, to share expenses of the joint legislative committee
24 and its members. Any expenditure of money shall be made in
25 compliance with policies set forth by the Senate Committee on
26 Rules and shall be subject to the approval of the Senate
27 Committee on Rules; and be it further

28 *Resolved*, That the Assembly Committee on Rules may make
29 money available from the Assembly Operating Fund, as it deems
30 necessary, to share expenses of the joint legislative committee
31 and its members. Any expenditure of money shall be made in
32 compliance with policies set forth by the Assembly Committee
33 on Rules and shall be subject to the approval of the Assembly
34 Committee on Rules; and be it further

35 *Resolved*, That the joint legislative committee continue in
36 existence until December 31, 2008.

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